

Environmental Charter School
829 Milton Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY

SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION POLICY STATEMENT

1. Purpose

The Environmental Charter School at Frick Park is cognizant of the increasing complexity of the stresses, which impact our students and their families. We accept our responsibility to assist students and parents through difficult situations.

The Board of Trustees, in recognition of the need to protect the health, safety and welfare of it's students, to promote healthy development, to safeguard against the threat or attempt of suicide among school aged youth, and to address barriers to learning, hereby adopts this policy. This policy corresponds with and supports other federal, state, and local efforts to provide youth with prevention education, early identification and intervention, and access to all local resources to promote health and prevent personal harm or injury.

2. Prevention Education

Students should receive age appropriate lessons in their classrooms on the importance of safe and healthy choices, as well as help seeking strategies for self and others. Lessons may be taught by teachers, community service providers, and/or student services staff. Students who are in need of intervention will be referred to school counselors and/or the Student Assistance Program (SAP) team for screening and/or recommendations.

3. Staff Training and Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for safeguarding the health and safety of students. All staff are expected to exercise sound professional judgment, err on the side of caution and demonstrate extreme sensitivity throughout any crisis situation. All school personnel should be informed of the signs of youth depression/suicide.



Any staff member who is originally made aware of any threat or witness any attempt towards self-harm, that is written, drawn, spoken or threatened, will immediately notify a building principal or their designee. Any threat in any form must be treated as real and dealt with immediately. No student should be left alone, nor confidences promised. Thus, in cases of life threatening situations a student's confidentiality will be waived. The Environmental Charter School's Suicide Risk Assessment Procedures will be implemented as needed.

4. Suicide Risk/Incident

For any of the situations defined below, staff should ensure the individual is supervised for safety and immediately notify the building principal or his/her designee to initiate ECS Suicide Risk Assessment or Postvention Procedures.

Suicide Threat

Definition – A suicide threat is a verbal or non-verbal communication that the individual intends to harm him/herself with the intention to die, but has not acted on the behavior.

Suicidal Act of Attempt

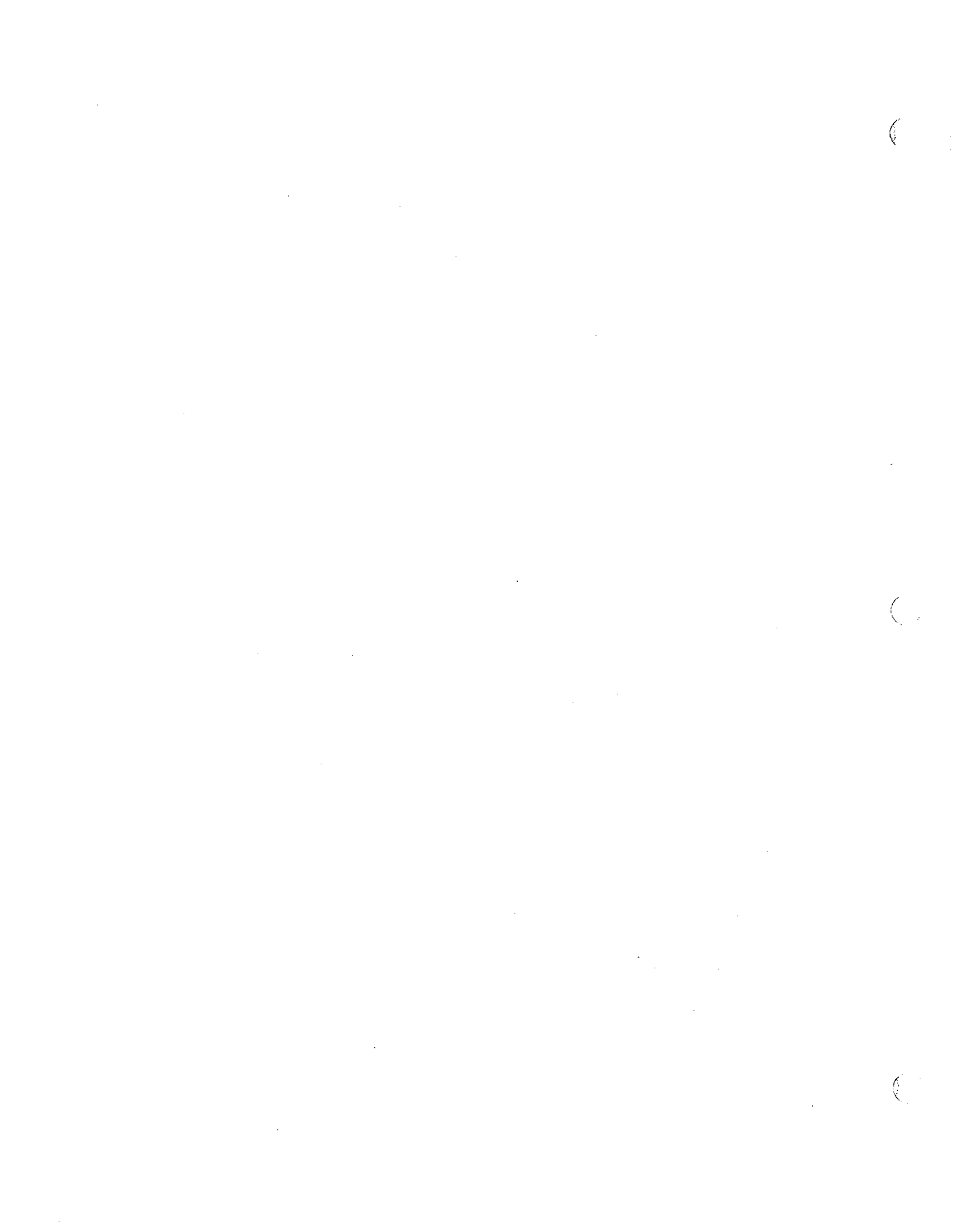
Definition – A suicidal act (also referred to as a suicide attempt) – a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person probably intended to kill himself or herself; a suicidal act may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

Suicide Completion of a Student or Employee

Definition – Suspected Suicide (also referred to as suicide completion) – death from injury, poisoning, or suffocation where there is initial indication or evidence that the self-inflicted act may have led to the person's death. **Note:** The coroner's office or medical examiner's office must first confirm that the death was a suicide before any school official may state this as the cause of death. Schools should adhere to the wishes of the family in this regard and respect their right to privacy and confidentiality.

5. Postvention

If a student or employee makes a **suicide act or attempt** (see definition above) on school grounds during the school day that requires **emergency** medical attention, staff made aware of this incident should contact 911 immediately so the individual can be taken to the nearest hospital for medical treatment. The school nurse should be notified immediately to address medical concerns until emergency responders arrive. The Crisis Management Team (under the direction of the building principal or his/her designee) should mobilize immediately to develop an action plan and collect as much relevant information as possible to pass on to the emergency medical professionals on their way. Home Office staff and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or the employee's emergency contact person should be made



aware of the issue as soon as possible. Staff should follow ECS Postvention Procedures.

If a student or employee **completes an act of suspected suicide** (see above definition) on or off school grounds, staff should follow the ECS Postvention Procedures and Death/Memorial Policy.

Recommendations for Actions to Avoid during Postvention


- a. Do not ever announce the death of anyone over the public address system.
- b. Do not hold an assembly program or bring large groups of students together in one place to discuss suicide out of respect for the deceased and his/her family and because student responses are difficult to monitor in large groups.
- c. Avoid cancelling school, classes or pre-planned activities unless absolutely necessary; students find comfort in following their normal routine when they are under stress, within reason. Discuss with supervisor and Postvention collaborators prior to proceeding with any cancellations.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS CONTROL.

ADOPTED this 15th day of October, 2014.



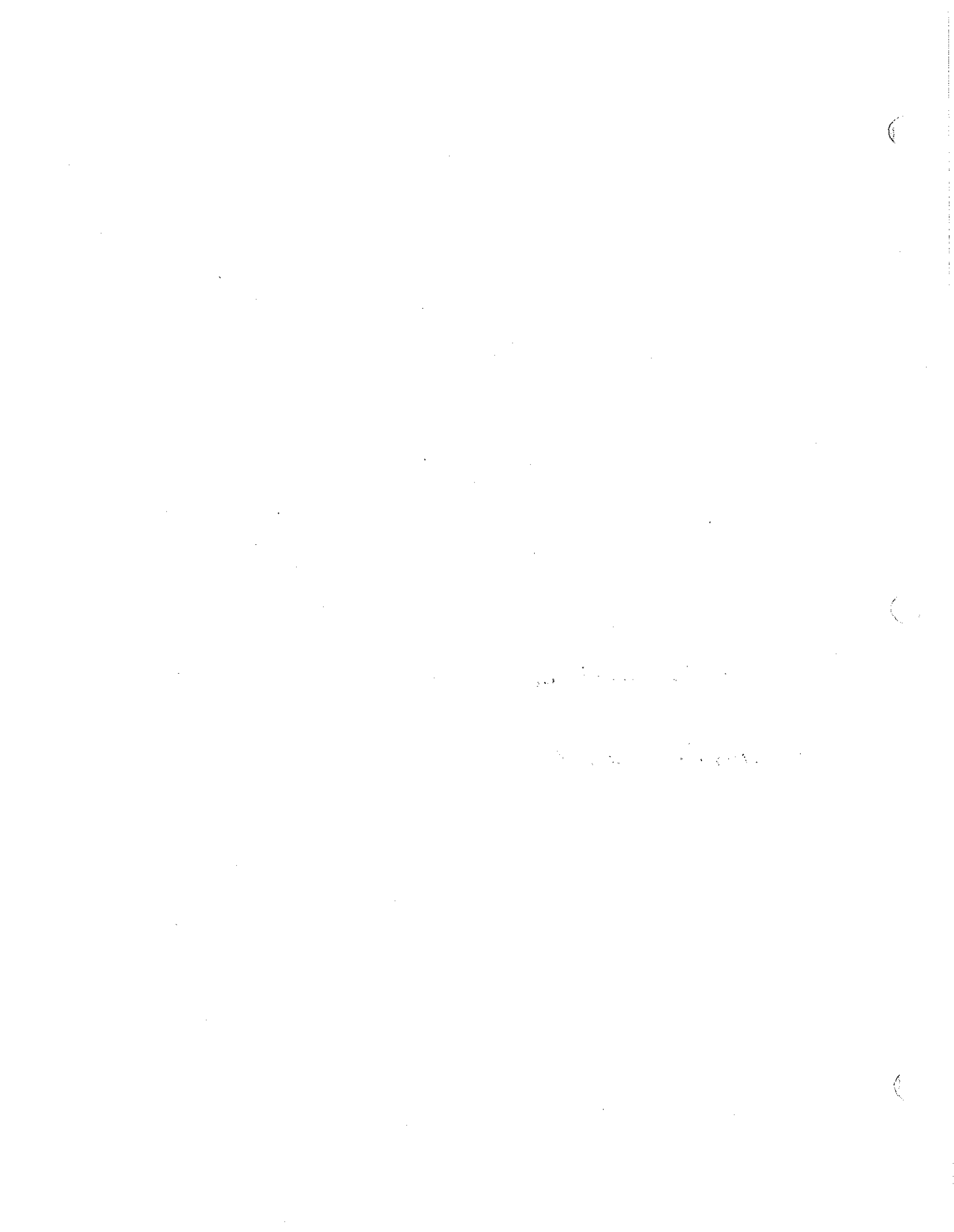
President

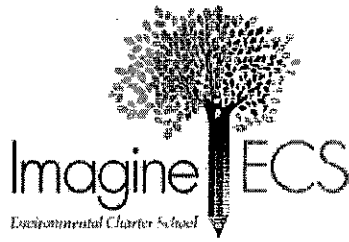


Secretary

This policy was developed from the STAR Center's sample retrieved from <http://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/> on 11/5/13.

Definitions from *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action*.
Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, 2001.





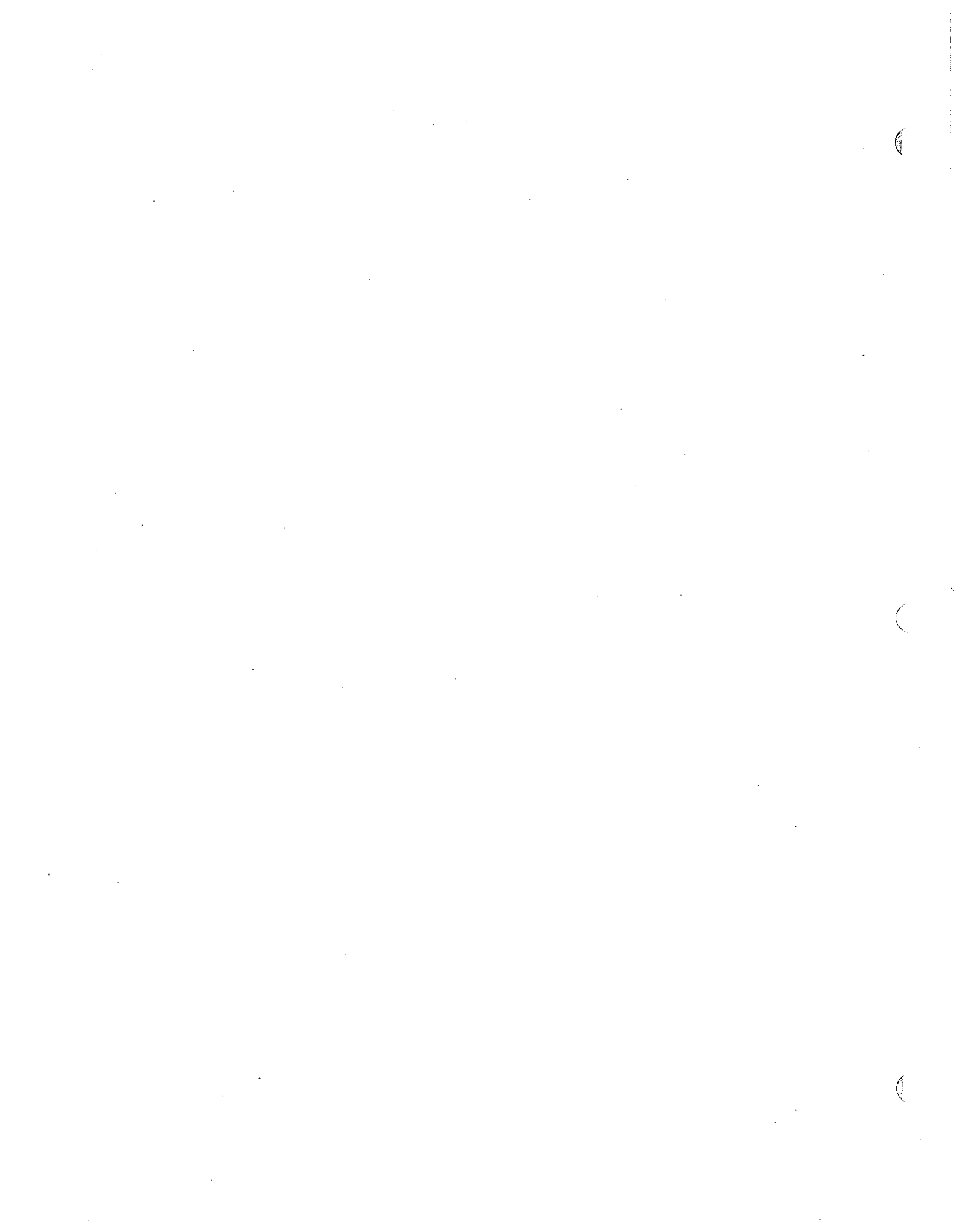
POLICY STATEMENT

Suicide Intervention

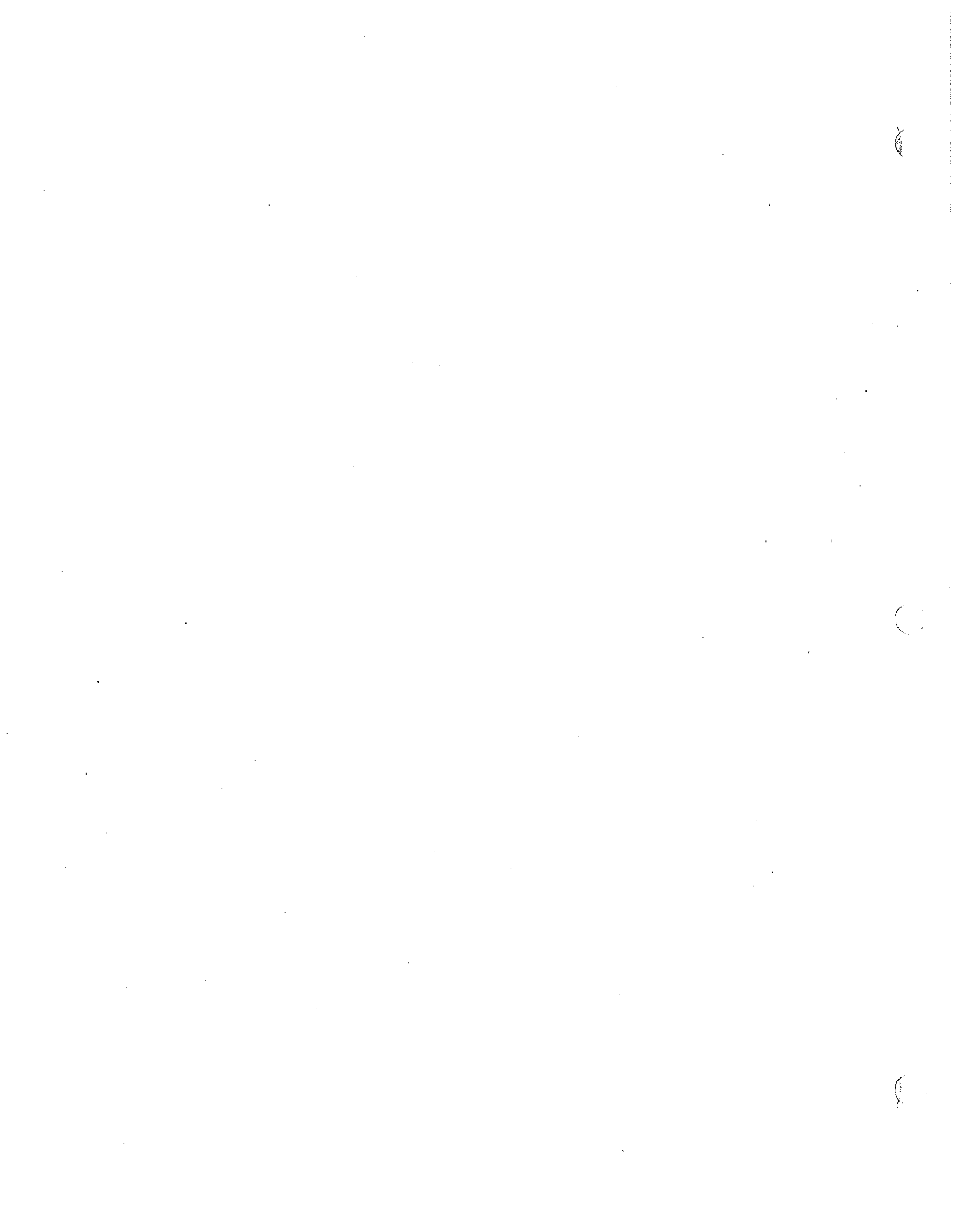
The Imagine Environmental Charter School is cognizant of the increasing complexity of the stresses, which impact our students and their families. We accept our responsibility to assist students and parents through difficult situations.

Situational Procedures

- I. Suicidal Ideation or Suicide Threat-*An indication, either verbal or written, of a student's thoughts about student's stated intent to harm him/herself.*
 - A. The staff member with knowledge of the suicidal ideation or threat will notify the administrator. The school counselor or administrator (with appropriate mental health support if necessary), will interview the student to assess the level of risk.
 - B. If the student is assessed to be at risk, the school counselor or administrator (with appropriate mental health support if necessary), will take the following action:
 1. Have the student relinquish any means of harming/hurting him/herself.
 2. Arrange for an appropriate staff member to remain with the student.
 3. Contact parent(s)/guardian to obtain **immediate intervention/assessment** with an appropriate mental health provider.
 4. The student may not be released from school without parent permission.
 5. If parent/guardian cannot be contacted:
 - a. Contact person listed as emergency contact.
 - b. If emergency contact cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time, communicate directly with mental health provider to arrange appropriate intervention.
 - c. Continue attempt to contact parent/guardian.
 6. In the event that an assessment cannot be obtained immediately, determine whether the student should attend school in the interim.
 7. Refer to the administrator or school counselor for follow up:



- III. Outside Support Resources in Conjunction with Administration
- A. Prepare a written statement for teachers to read at a specific time.
 - B. Prepare a letter to inform parents of:
 - 1. student's death
 - 2. available services to students
 - 3. memorial policies
 - 4. policy for student's release from school to attend the funeral
 - C. Offer individual screenings and support groups to students-list all students seen.
 - D. If necessary, offer brief classroom presentation about grief and ways of dealing with grief.
 - E. Provide support to faculty.
 - F. Meet at the end of the day to review the day's happenings and to develop further strategies if needed.
 - G. Offer other support services as necessary.
 - H. Follow up on recommendations of individual screening.



- a. Confirm student's assessment by obtaining appropriate release of information and contacting mental health provider.
 - b. Will participate with additional activities as necessary.
 - 8. There will be follow-up consultations between the mental health provider and school to determine compliance with recommendations. Refusal to comply with recommendations may result in alternative placement and/or contact Children Youth and Family Services.
- II. *Suicidal Gesture-An intentional non-verbal or symbolic, self-destructive act. It is differentiated from ideation by a past or current behavioral manifestation as opposed to verbal expression (examples: self-mutilation, innocuous overdose, playing with knives or weapons).*
 - A. The staff member with knowledge of the gesture will immediately contact the building administrator.
 - B. The administrator(with appropriate mental health support if necessary) or school counselor, will take the following action:
 - 1. If the student is injured, contact the school nurse.
 - 2. Interview the student to assess the level of risk.
 - 3. Have the student relinquish any means of harming him/herself.
 - 4. Arrange for an appropriate staff member to stay with the student.
 - 5. Contact the parent(s)/guardian to attain **immediate intervention/assessment** through an appropriate mental health provider or medical attention, if not previously obtained.
 - 6. The student may not be released from school without parent permission.
 - 7. If parent(s)/guardian cannot be contacted:
 - a. Contact person listed as emergency contact.
 - b. If emergency contact cannot be made within a reasonable amount of time, communicate directly with mental health provider to arrange appropriate intervention.
 - 8. In the event that an assessment cannot be obtained immediately, determine whether the student should attend school in the interim.
 - 9. Refer to the administrator or school counselor for follow up:
 - a. Confirm student's assessment by obtaining appropriate release of information and contacting mental health provider.
 - b. Will participate with additional activities as necessary.
 - 10. There will be follow-up consultations between the mental health provider and school to determine compliance with recommendations. Refusal to comply with recommendations may result in alternative placement and/or contact with Children Youth and Family Services.
- III. *Suicide Attempt-An intentional self-destructive act which is potentially lethal-a likelihood that the method used will result in fatality (examples: serious*



overdose, ingestion of a highly toxic substance, self-infliction of serious injury).

A. The staff member with knowledge of the attempt will take the following action:

1. Do not allow the student to move.
2. Arrange for appropriate staff member to stay with the student.
3. Contact administrator.

B. The administrator will:

1. Contact the school nurse and appropriate school resources. Advise nurse of severity of injuries so that the need to contact medical assistance can be assessed. If advised by nurse, or deemed necessary, an ambulance will be contacted.
2. Contact parents and apprise them of the situation. Inform them that the student must obtain immediate medical/psychiatric attention including an assessment by an appropriate mental health provider. If parents cannot be contacted:
 - a. Contact person listed as emergency contact.
 - b. If emergency contact cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time, communicate directly with mental health provider to arrange appropriate intervention.
3. If the student is physically agitated, refuses to stay in an area where directed, is combative, runs away, or possesses a weapon, the local law enforcement agency should be contacted.
4. If possible, interview the student to obtain details about the attempt.
5. After the emergency subsides, the parties involved should document the incident.
6. Refer the student to the school counselor:
 - a. Confirm student's assessment by obtaining appropriate release of information and contacting mental health provider.
 - b. Will participate with additional activities as necessary.
7. There will be a follow-up consultation between the school and the hospital/mental health provider to determine compliance with recommendations. Refusal to comply with recommendations may result in alternative placement and/or contact with Children Youth and Family Services.

IV. Suicidal Attempt Outside of School – *A student attempting suicide outside of school and off school grounds.*

A. The staff member with knowledge of the attempted suicide will contact the administrator.

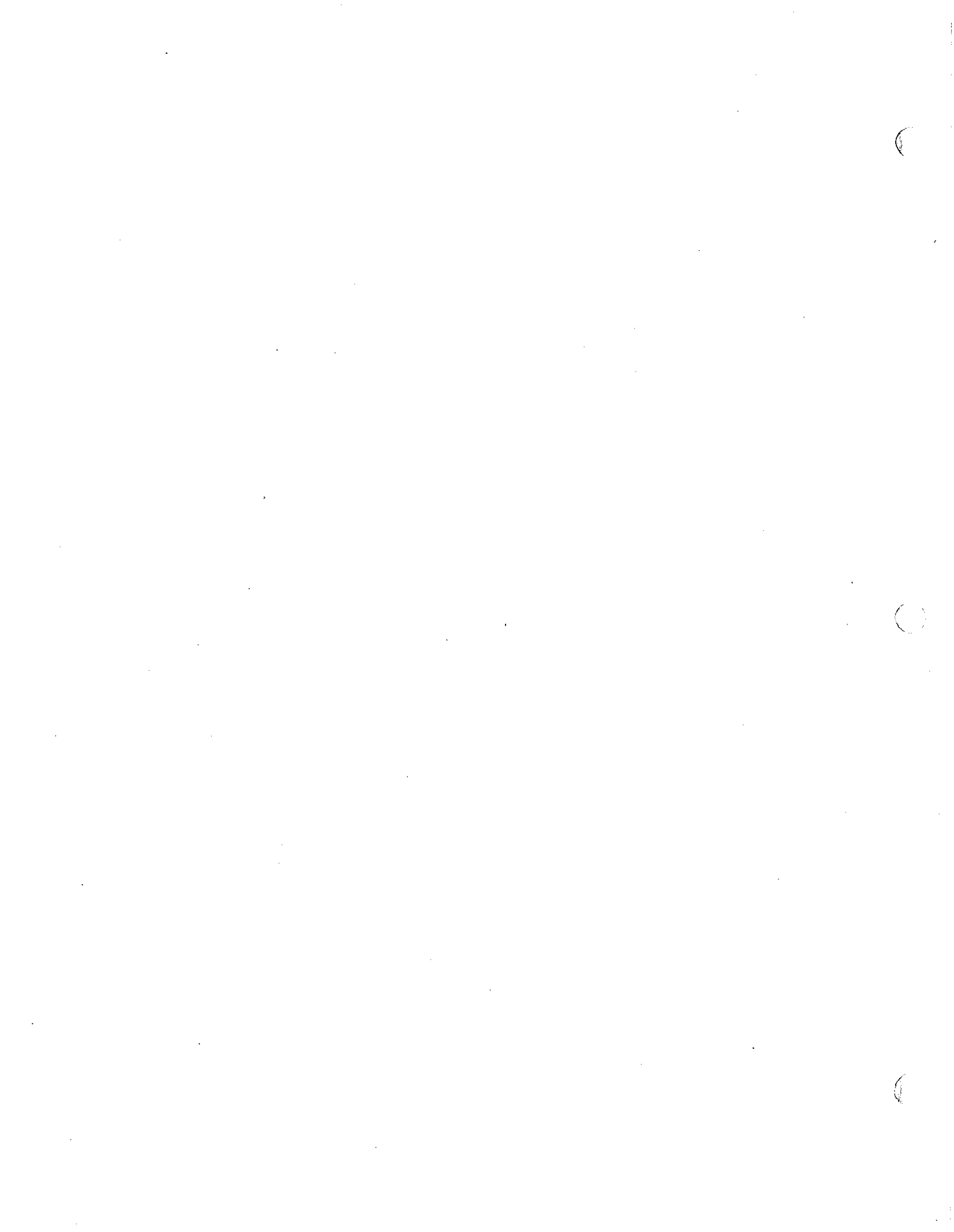
B. The administrator will:

1. Notify parent/guardian to obtain information about the attempt.
2. Recommend that the parent/guardian obtain student assessment by an appropriate mental health provider.
3. Refer the student to the school counselor:



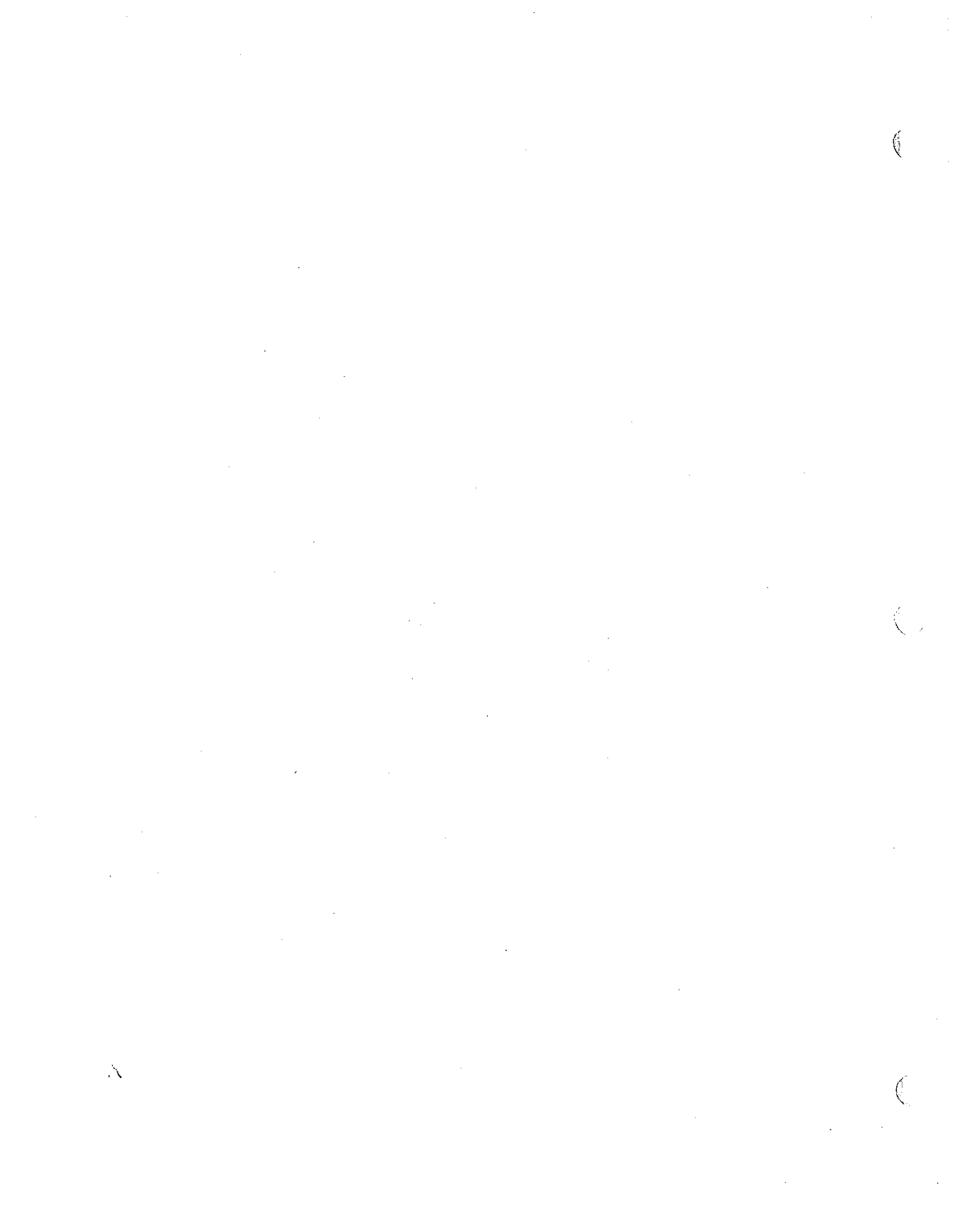
- a. Confirm student's assessment by obtaining appropriate release of information and contacting mental health provider.
 - b. Will participate with additional activities as necessary.
4. There will be a follow-up consultation between the school and mental health provider to determine compliance with recommendations. Refusal to comply with recommendations may result in alternative placement and or contact with Children Youth and Families.

Attached: List of County Funded Mental Health Providers



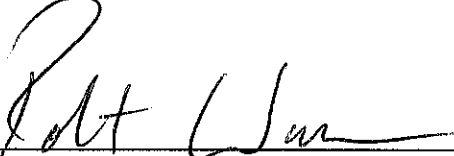
List of County Funded Mental Health Providers

<p>Milestones Tel. 412-731-9707 Offices in: Wilkinsburg; Monroeville; Penn Hills</p>
<p>Chartiers Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services Tel. 412-221-3302 Offices in: Bridgeville; South Hills communities</p>
<p>Family Services of Western Pa Tel. 1-888-222-4200 Offices in: Tarentum; New Kensington; Pittsburgh-East Liberty</p>
<p>Mercy Behavioral Health Tel. 412-323-4500 Offices in: Pittsburgh-North Side; South Side; East End; Downtown; North Hills communities</p>
<p>Mon Yough Community Services Tel;. 412-675-8300 Office in: McKeesport</p>
<p>Staunton Clinic Tel. 412-749-7330 Offices in: Sewickley; McKees Rocks; Bellevue; Wexford</p>
<p>Turtle Creek Valley MHMR, Inc Tel. 412-351-0222 Offices in: Braddock; Homestead; Turtle Creek</p>
<p>Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic Tel. 412-624-1000 Office in: Pittsburgh-Oakland</p>




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ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 20____



Chair



Secretary

